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The Concept of *L'Homme Sauvage*

With reference to contemporary accounts, this article demonstrates how the tradition of the Renaissance folklore figure of the Wild Man, along with earlier European analogues, prejudiced early explorers' perceptions of New World natives. The author demonstrates how these attitudes altered through continuing contact with the natives and discusses how consideration of the natives as "savages" rather than as civilized peoples helped justify colonial attitudes to aboriginal property, religious, and legal rights.

The concept of *l'homme sauvage* is usually traced to Europe's discovery of the New World and its inhabitants. According to this view, Europe's introduction to Amerindians was also her introduction to natural man, at least in any numbers. This event is seen as being largely responsible for the development of the idea of *l'homme sauvage*: the savage who could be either noble or debased, but who in any event was not civilized. Civilization was not considered to have developed anywhere in North America; such achievements as the city-states of Mexico, Central America, or Peru were either ignored or dismissed as being at best barbarous. However, an examination of the European concept of savagery reveals that its origins are both more complex and far older than such a view would indicate. In fact it involves, among other things, the well-known Renaissance folkloric figure of the Wild Man, early Christian perceptions of monkeys, apes, and baboons, and the classical Greek and Roman tradition of the noble savage. Even after having considered all this we will still not have arrived at the origins of the concept, which is at least as old as civilization itself. This paper will consider *l'homme sauvage* from the vantage point of France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as being most pertinent to our early Canadian experience, even though the idea itself is universal.[1]

Columbus's encounter with the Arawaks of San Salvador presented Europe with a problem of classification. Here was a New World inhabited by multitudes whose existence had not previously been suspected and for whom no provision appeared to have been made in Christian orthodoxy. Awkward as the fact was to deal with, the New World seemed to have been left out of

the division of the world among Noah's three sons, Shem having peopled Asia, Japhet, Europe, and Ham, Africa. To Renaissance Europe the immediate task was to fit this new world into the three-fold *oikoumene*, exemplified by the Pope's triple crown. In the simplest terms, were Amerindians descended from Noah, or did they present an earlier form of humanity akin to beasts? Pope Alexander VI ruled, in 1493, that these people "being in peace, and, as reported going unclothed and not eating flesh," were human and capable of being Christianized. This was reaffirmed by Pope Paul III in 1537.[2]

But a tantalizing question remained: if the world represented a single order, as taught by Christian orthodoxy, how had it been possible for other "civilities"[3] to develop value scales so totally different from those of Europe? Conversely, how could human societies possess similar cultural traits without having been in contact with each other? Renaissance Europe's attempts to answer these questions only multiplied the contradictions. In the face of such difficulties, the simplest solution, at least in the realm of practical affairs, was to place New World cultures beyond the pale of "civility" and to think of Amerindians as *hommes sauvages*. But even that solution presented problems; just one example was how to define the word "sauvage."

A modern definition, that of Larousse, says that among other things it means not cultivated, tamed, nor domesticated, or that which frightens easily. Applied to men, it denotes he who lives away from society, beyond the pale of its laws, without fixed abode—by analogy, he who is rude and fierce.[4] Larousse introduces these definitions with the statement that in ancient French the adjective "salvage" or "sauvage" simply signified the forest habitat and was a synonym of the Latin *sylvaticus*. The time boundaries implied by the word "ancient" are not specified.

I will take the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to be included in that term. A survey of French writing during that period does not support the thesis that at that epoch "sauvage" meant simply living in the woods. In that intensely religious age, the medieval habit of viewing man in moral terms was still far too deeply implanted for such a neutral use to have been anything but desultory. While shades of emphasis could and did vary from writer to writer, the general implication was always clear: to be savage meant to be living according to nature, in the manner "plus approchant des bêtes farouches que des hommes."[5] To cosmographer Sebastian Münster, barbarians, savages, and monsters were all in the same category.[6]

La Curne de Sainte-Pallaye placed such a usage of the word even earlier. In his *Dictionnaire historique*, in which he traced the meanings of words from their origins to the time of Louis XIV, he listed eight meanings for "sauvage," of which the first was "not tamed" and the last, "extraordinary." In between are such definitions as solitary, uncivilized, ferocious, demented, and foreign.[7]

Richelet, whose dictionary was published in 1680, said the word applied to fierce persons who were the enemies of society and agreeable conversation.[8] Furetière in his *Dictionnaire universel,* 1691, defined a savage as a man without regular habitation, without religion, law, or civility. Nearly all of America, he said, had been found peopled with savages, most of whom were cannibals. He added, "Les Sauvages vont nuds, & sont velus, couvert de poil."[9] Nowhere was it implied that "sauvage" meant simply living in the woods.

I will return shortly to that rather startling description of Amerindians as naked hairy savages. But first let us see how Europeans initially spoke of Arawaks, cannibal Caribs, and other New World men. Columbus called them "Indians" and did not refer to them as "savages" except in the case of armed encounters.[10] Neither did Vespucci, although he found some of them brutish and loathsome in appearance, cruel of nature, and barbarous in their manner of living; however, he said the cannibals were "very savage."[11] But in general, apart from Columbus's "Indians," early explorers used such terms as "hommes," "gens," "habitants," "indigènes," or perhaps "cannibals." In spite of this it is evident from reading early voyage accounts that New World men had been quickly equated with savagery. This is indicated by Cartier's comment, reporting on Amerindians he met on his first voyage:

> This people may well be called savage, for they are the sorriest folk there can be in the world, and the whole lot of them had not anything above the value of five sous, their canoes and fishing nets excepted.[12]

Cartier did not explain what he meant by the word "savage" beyond the lack of material possessions and a consequent style of living which he did not consider acceptable. The appelation "savage" for New World people does not appear frequently in print until about the middle of the sixteenth century; by the third quarter, it was in general use. In the seventeenth century, the French and English called the inhabitants of the New World "savages," whether they were descended from the court poets of the city-states of Central and South America or were nomadic hunters following caribou in the austere north; Spaniards and Portuguese, however, used the term "indios."

In his benign aspects the "savage" was represented during these two centuries as living in "l'enfance de la Nature" or, more ideally, in a Golden Age, that concept from classical antiquity that had not ceased to haunt Europeans' minds. "Ils se content, en effet, de si peu;"[13] or, in the words of Vespucci, "they live content with what nature gives them."[14] In his adverse aspect the savage was "un Statue vegetale, un Phantosme de chair et d'os,

un Homme artificiel qui ne se remue que par force."[15] He was without heart for his natural responsibilities, had no eye for the beauties of nature, did not even have names for painting and sculpture; he could not appreciate music or fine perfume and ate his food raw, bloody, and still living. Solitary and alone in the midst of others, he was indifferent to suffering and cruelty, "n'ayant pas affections honnestes et naturelles."[16]

Such representations, while graphic, were not considered satisfactory explanations of savagery, even at the time. But how was it to be defined? First of all, that it was far removed from reason. In the words of cosmographer Pierre d'Avity, "On doit estimer barbare ceux dont les façons & coustumes s'éloignent extraordinairement de la droite raison."[17] The belief of the day held that this was a natural consequence of a lack of knowledge of God, which was a prerequisite for mental activity. This was Augustine's position. That it had long been held to be applicable to Amerindians is indicated by the commission Jacques Cartier received for his third Canadian voyage from Francis I, which refers to the people of Canada "vivans sans cognoissance de Dieu et Sans usaige de raison."[18] Emeric de Crucé, eminent theorist in politics and economics, wrote, "Je mets au rang des bestes les peuples sauvages que n'usent point de raison."[19]

To d'Avity, this non-use of reason was the most important of five "degrés de brutalité."[20] By using the term "degré" he imparted a hierarchy to brutishness, a concept congenial to the Renaissance ethos. The second level of savagery he found in the manner of procuring food—hunting and gathering, living like beasts off the land, rather than practicing agriculture. There was also the nature of the food to consider. The Amerindian diet contained elements which Europeans had traditionally believed to be linked with demonism; at best, these could be considered "savage." Herrera said of the people of Cuba that they ate "many filthy things, as large Spiders, Worms breeding in rotten Wood and other nasty Places, and Fish half raw, for as soon as taken, before boiling, they pull'd out their Eyes, and eat them, which things any Spaniard would loath."[21]

This concern with the diet of the Amerindian was the logical consequence of the widespread belief "que nostre complexion suit la nourriture."[22] The implication of this, of course, was that "il faut que la nourriture sauvage soit suivi d'un complexion & nature sauvage."[23] Amerindians made similar observations concerning Europeans. A shaman accused Hennepin of eating serpents and poison, adding that such folk as the Recollet missionary ate thunderbolts.[24] Amerindians also shared the European belief that one develops the characteristics of the food one eats. A hunter, for instance, who ate of a slow-moving animal risked losing his speed of action; and as is well known in the case of cannibalism, eating the heart of a brave enemy was at least partly motivated by the desire to acquire his courage. Lack of regular

meal hours was also cited to prove savagery.[25] Even worse, Amerindians took their food from the ground, without napkin or any other cloth, eating out of earthen pots or calabashes.[26] According to one unsympathetic observer, "ils mangent souvent couché comme les chiens; Enfin ils ne se gênent aucunement dans leurs actions & suivent le pur animal."[27]

Nudity was d'Avity's third degree of "brutishness": "car quelqu'uns n'ayants nul sentiment de honnesté ne couvrent pas mesmes leurs parties honteuses."[28] In fact, held d'Avity, it was a sense of shame that distinguished men from animals. His fourth level concerned the type of habitation: the most barbarous people lived in caves and trees, although nomads living in tents were not much better. Lack of government was fifth: "car quelques uns entièrement barbares vivent sans aucunes loix, & sans aucuns chefs, tant en temps de paix que de guerre, quelques autres n'ont ny loix ny chefs en temps de paix, mais seulement aux occurrences de guerres."[29] On this point, however, d'Avity conceded that some New World peoples, such as those of "Tlascalla and Chilolla" and New Spain, had what qualified by European standards as government. Peruvians even had a form of civility, although they did not have the arch. But their ingenuity in building bridges had to be admired: "ils en font de très grands sur des rivières fort larges & profondes . . .on voit. . .un de ces ponts long de 300 pieds."[30] Others were not so prepared as d'Avity to grant that the Peruvian government could be classed as civilized. Acosta, for one, found that it was tyrannical as it treated the people as beasts and the rulers as gods.[31] To him that was barbarous; in others words, it was an ameliorated form of savagery. Acosta discerned three classes of barbarians: those who were not far from reason and had governments and cities, such as the Chinese or Japanese; those who did not have writing, but who still had government, such as the Peruvians or Mexicans; and those who lived in the woods without fixed abode, as did the Caribs.

A concomitant to the lack of writing as a characteristic of brutishness was the "elusive" or even "defective" structure of languages which impeded the communication of Christian doctrine.[32] Without the letters "f, l, r," how could Amerindians have "foy, loy et roy"?[33] A favorite word for describing their languages was "baragouin," gibberish.

These efforts at definition were based on the assumption that if savagery were a condition, it must have certain characteristics that would make it recognizable as such. From this point of view, d'Avity's list is as interesting for what it leaves out as for what it contains. Contemporaries would have been struck by the fact that the cosmographer did not include lack of order in sexual matters, although this had been widely reported of New World peoples. This indicates some independence of judgement on his part, for although it was being realized that such reports were exaggerated, to say the least, this was by no means generally believed.[34] One of the omissions

that strikes today's observer is dirtiness, particularly as later it came to be considered a standard indication of savagery, Amerindian or otherwise. But during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans were struck by the frequency with which Amerindians bathed. It was told of Moctezuma, "the chief shoots to heaven when he is angry," that he bathed every day "were it ever so cold."[35] Jean de Léry considered it worth reporting that the Tupinambá of Brazil washed their mouths and hands before and after eating.[36] The refusal of the Brazilians to wear clothes on the grounds that it interfered with bathing struck Europeans as being at the very least absurd. Gilbert Chinard goes further and says that they regarded it as being actually barbarous.[37]

An even more striking omission is that of cruelty, particularly as historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been at great pains to prove the savagery of Amerindians because of their war practices. Apart from their cannibalistic aspects, these practices were not considered in the days of d'Avity to be more cruel than those of Europe. Quite the contrary, in fact, as far as torture was concerned. Sixteenth-century accounts are dominated by reports of Spanish torture of Amerindians, particularly during the early part of the century when decimation of the New World peoples was at its height. The description "très cruel" which Europeans so often applied to New World men was a label habitually tagged onto unfamiliar people as well as onto enemies in war and did not usually refer to specific practices.

Geronimo Cardano (1501–1576), Italian physician and mathematician, did not consider cruelty a particular characteristic of savages, as he noted that such people were often very gentle. Observing that they could be more humane than many Greeks and Italians, he went on to say that they were neither immoral nor lacking in intelligence. Their savagery lay, rather, in a psychological instability: "Before a matter is understood they begin to rage and after they have become excited it is very difficult to quiet them."[38] This lack of emotional control made them liberty-loving and seditious; it also left them vulnerable to being imposed upon.

Cardano thought he was realistically depicting men of the New World, among other "savages." Actually his description, as well as the definitions we have been considering, was strongly influenced by one of the most familiar of the folk figures of this period, the Wild Man of the Wood. In much of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writings on savagery, the influence of this figure is evident. Found throughout Europe, but particularly in the northern and central regions, he was known by such names as *Wildeman* in Flanders and Germany; Wild Man, wodewose, or woodhouse in England, Ireland, and Scotland; and *l'homme sauvage* in France. He was also known as *pilosus, orcus, Schrat* and ogre; or perhaps as *homo sylvestris* or *homine agreste.*

All of these terms were more or less synonymous with savage, satyr, or faun. To concentrate on "wodewose" for a moment, it derived from the Old English *wode* or *wod*, meaning furious or in a state of insanity. Like Odin or Wodin, the great god of the northern nations who presided over war and feasted on the slain, *wode* expressed the rage of battle. It also had implications of unrestrained sensuality and of the demonic. We get a glimpse of forerunners of *wodewoses* or wild men in Pausanias, who during the second century told of satyrs attacking a woman from a Greek ship and treating her "in such a way as we will not venture to describe."[39] The following century we read of a satyr causing panic among village women.[40]

The Wild Man was first pictorialized during the mid-thirteenth century in grotesques decorating manuscript margins.[41] His popularity gained momentum during the latter part of the fourteenth century, reaching its peak during the Renaissance; after the seventeenth century it went into a decline. His origins can be traced back to classical antiquity or even to Babylon and Uruk, as well as to the ancient Hebrews. In Roman mythology, his antecedent descended from the Titan Saturn whose reign was described as a Golden Age of innocence and purity, although Saturn himself was a monster who ate all but three of his own children: Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto. Orcus, also descended from Saturn, carried the dead to the underworld. Saturn has certain similarities with the Greek Cronos, the youngest of the Titans, who was the son of Gaia and Ouranos, Earth and Heaven, two aspects of the same identity before they were separated by their son. Although associated with the Golden Age, Saturn symbolized life-devouring hunger and insatiable desire. Incapable of allowing his people to evolve, he was emasculated by his son and returned to the heavens.[42] The Wild Man's physical resemblance to the satyr Silenus has frequently been noted,[43] and he has even been identified with Hercules. For the Hebrews, the Wild Man was represented as a spiritual rather than as a physical condition; he was a rebel against the Lord, insane, accursed, and destructive.[44]

These traditions merged to produce the Renaissance *wodewose* or *l'homme sauvage*. He was a popular figure representing the negation of the Christian ideal, a folk version of the Antichrist. In the days of courtly love he was the embodiment of brute sensuality as opposed to the chivalrous love of the knight. He was usually depicted as covered all over with hair, except for knees, elbows, and face, and he had a full beard. His hairiness symbolized his enormous strength on which he depended as he stood alone against all, even his own kind. This strength was also indicated by his habit of carrying a knotty club or an uprooted tree. Unable to speak, he shunned man and was devoid of knowledge of God, which meant either he did not have the use of his reason or else he did not possess it.[45] Unable to control his passions, he assaulted lone women in the woods.[46] However, he was intimately acquainted

with nature's secrets, which he sometimes shared with peasants; at times he would tend their cattle or would heal a wounded knight with herbs. But his closest associates were bears and devils.[47]

One of the most vivid portrayals of this figure is that by Edmund Spenser, who made him outsized, "All overgrowne with haire . . . with huge great teeth." He "fed on fleshly gore, the signe whereof yet stain'd his bloudy lips afore." This unprepossessing figure lived on the "spoile of women," whom he raped and then ate. He had already caught and eaten seven by the time he appeared in *The Faerie Queene*.[48] A gentler version of the Wild Man in the same work is Satyrane, whose father was a satyr; he rescued ladies instead of preying on them. In the English folk imagination of the day, the hairy man was considered to be green, hair and all. But whether he was shown as fierce or gentle, physical portrayals of him were remarkably uniform in manuscript illustration, tapestries, and sculpture.

The first record of a Wild Man play dates from Padua in 1208.[49] But it was in pageants and spectacles where he was most in evidence, particularly those of Carnival and Twelfth Night, when his disguise was regarded as a licence for rampaging violence.[50] At one point he was even taking part in tournaments, challenging knights. One of the best-known incidents involving a Wild Man masquerade occurred on 28 January 1392 at the Bal des Ardents at the court of Charles VI, "le fou," of France, when several revellers dressed as Wild Men burned to death.[51] Sometimes the Carnival Wild Man, girdled and crowned with feathers, pretended to feed only on raw meat which was handed to him on the end of a stick.[52] Father Paul Le Jeune, seeing his first Amerindians with painted faces at Tadoussac in 1632, remarked, "je voyois ces masques qui courent en France a Carème."[53] Denonville, governor-general of New France in 1685–1689, noted that such customs had reached the point where his predecessor, de La Barre, had had to suppress them. However, he had not entirely succeeded:

> A way of dressing up like savages, stark naked, not only on carnival days, but on all days of feasting and debauchery, has been treated as a nice action and a joke. These manners tend only to maintain the young people in the spirit of living like savages and to communicate with them to be eternally profligate like them.[54]

From pageantry the Wild Man retired into heraldry, where he is seen today as a supporting figure that at times is hard to distinguish from Silenus. More than two hundred European families have the Wild Man as emblem. There was also a Wild Woman, but she never attained the importance of the Wild

Man. This may have been partially because the Church tolerated the latter, albeit reluctantly, but in the case of the Wild Woman, her rituals called for offerings, which the Church would not countenance. Also, she was far more closely connected with the old religions, which the church still sought to suppress. In Spain, dancing disguised as Orca could draw a year's penitence.[55]

Most Europeans who sailed to the New World must have been aware of the Wild Man, who was as familiar a figure as Santa Claus is today. Columbus referred to Amerindians as "wild" but suitable for slavery; an observer, describing the New World men brought to Portugal by Corte-Real in 1501 (who have been variously identified as Inuit, Naskapi, Beothuck, or Micmac), said they had most gentle countenances but most bestial habits and manners, "like wild men."[56] The seven Amerindians brought to Rouen in 1509 were described as *homines sylvestres*.[57] Shakespeare's Caliban, whose name is an anagram of "cannibal," is more Wild Man than Amerindian, although he is supposed to be a New World native.

The Wild Man was believed to actually exist, as was indicated by reports of hairy men in far-off places. Pliny, for example, had told of such creatures in India.[58] The Borgia Map, drawn in the fifteenth century before Columbus's voyage, is illustrated with hairy Amazons.[59] Occasionally hairy men appear in Renaissance voyage accounts, such as those of Pigafetta.[60] A century and a half later, the newspaper *Le Mercure Galant* reported on "les Sauvages de l'Amérique, Hommes cruels et sans raison, à qui nos Pescheurs sont obligez de faire la chasse comme à des Bestes, puis qu'ils ont outre leur férocité le corps hérisseé de poil, & armé d'ongles merveilleusement longs & crochus."[61]

That the Wild Man had become confused in the popular mind with Amerindians is evident not only from such obviously misinformed reports, but particularly from the repeated attempts of missionaries and colonial officials to discredit the notion that New World men were hairy.[62] Their efforts were unavailing. The first denial I have found was published by André Thevet in *Les Singularitez de la France Antarctique*, which appeared in 1557. In a chapter entitled "Contre l'opinion de ceux qui estiment les Sauvages estre pelus," Thevet asserted that those who insisted that Amerindians were hairy had obviously never seen them, for the truth was the opposite: they took great care to remove all body hair.[63] Later he theorized that the custom of the northern Amerindians of wearing furs had given rise to the belief.[64] Jean de Léry felt strongly enough about the matter to mention it twice, and he also speculated that the belief had risen from the custom of the Brazilian Tupinambá of glueing themselves all over with down or little feathers, which gave them a furred appearance.[65] Lescarbot repeated that line of reasoning.[66] Among the better-known names of those who issued denials were Sagard, Lahontan, Bressani, LeClercq, and Du Tertre.[67] Two centuries after Thevet, a French officer wrote, "Les sauvages du Canada sont fort different de l'idée

que l'on s'en fait communément en France. Loin d'être velus, comme on le croit, ils sont beaucoup moins couverts de poil que nous."[68] As long as the Wild Man existed in folk imagination, he influenced the European conception of the Amerindian.

Unaffected by all this, *l'homme sauvage* continued his solitary way, "noir et velu com ours enchainé." The line between man, monkeys, anthropoid apes, and even bears was by no means always clear to the Renaissance mind. Besides his descent from the mythologies of classical Greece, Rome, and the Middle East, and his connection with bears, the Wild Man contained elements from early reports of anthropoid apes, who were usually described as speechless human beings, *homines sylvestres*. According to Pliny,

> the Choromandae are a savage and wild people; distinct voice and speech have they none, but in steed thereof, they keepe an horrible gnashing and hideous noise: rough they are and hairie all over their bodies, eies they have red like the houlets and toothed they be like dogs.[69]

There is now no doubt that this was actually describing a troop of large monkeys or gibbons. The tendency was to transform these animals into quasi-human beings by exaggerating their human aspects. The Spanish, for instance, were reported to regard baboons as a race of people who refused to speak so that they would not be forced to live in subjection.[70] Similarly, the great apes and orang-outangs were said to be descended from people who had grown weary of work and the restraints of village life and so had retreated to the forests and an animal-like existence. They were also supposed to have been the products of miscegenation between women and animals.[71] Albertus Magnus saw apes as being intermediate between man and beast, *similtudines hominis*, an early version of the missing link.[72] Prester John's list of wild creatures, dated 1164, included *homines agrestes*,[73] which Cardano said resembled Wild Men.[74] As late as the mid-eighteenth century, an Englishman published an illustration of a "man in the wood," complete with his gnarled stick, and labelled him "The Satier, Savage, Wild-Man, Pigmy, Orang-outang, Chimp-anzee, etc."[75]

From such hesitations and confusions, it was not a long step to the idea of dual creation, of the Devil acting in competition with God but being capable only of producing a distorted version of the original. This concept was firmly established in Christian folklore: horse and ass, lion and cat, sun and moon, day and night.[76] An ape, as imperfected man, symbolized carnal desire; the apple-eating ape was seen in very much the same perspective as the Wild Man. This was reinforced by another characteristic that was applied

to apes during the Middle Ages: that of remembering injuries and harbouring hatred for a long time.[77] From this it followed that men who were of a vengeful disposition or who nursed the desire for revenge were acting in the manner of apes rather than as full-fledged human beings. In describing Amerindians as people who never forgot an injury, who were so vengeful that they even ate the lice which tormented them, and who had no order in their sexual relations, Renaissance writers were putting them into a context popularly associated with apes and Wild Men.

The position of *l'homme sauvage* between man and animal meant that he could act in concert with beasts as an intermediary between man and the underworld. In Renaissance Flanders he was included with the wild animals who guarded the fountain of life in the forest: "un géant à figure et à membres chevelus, armé d'un sapin déracineé . . . . ses sourcils s'unissent au dessus du nez. Il refuse ou accorde l'entrée du ciel."[78] Near the forest was the *Nobiskrug* where one obtained a passport to the other world; its insignia was a figure of a giant. We have already noted that in this capacity the Wild Man was also known as Orcus. To this day the sign "In dem Wildeman" is a favourite for inns and taverns in Belgium and The Netherlands. In Rouen during the sixteenth century this figure was frequently placed above doors of houses and appeared as a fireplace guardian.[79] He is found on the North Portal of Rouen Cathedral and guards the principal entrance to San Gregorio in Valladolid in Spain, as well as that of Casa de Montejo in Yucatán, built in 1549. In his demonic aspect he appears on tombs, usually being trampled underfoot by the commemorated figure.

In the France of this period the dark side of *l'homme sauvage* prevailed, and he became identified with the older Germanic comic devil, Hellekin, leader of the Wild Horde. Hellekin was particularly strongly entrenched in the mythology of the north; his marriage to the equally mythical Luque La Maudite in Rouen during the thirteenth century is said to have resulted in an actual spree that caused considerable damage to the city.[80] When animal skins and feathers were not available for the costuming of Hellekin in pageants, rags were substituted, which eventually became stylized into the diamond design which we associate with his theatrical descendant, Harlequin.[81] In this connection it is interesting to note that one of the theatrical successes of eighteenth-century Paris was *Arlequin Sauvage*, first presented at Théâtre des Italiens on 17 June 1721. This play, by Louis-François de La Drévetière, Sieur de l'Isle (1682–1756), concerns Arlequin, an Amerindian brought to Europe, who proceeds to run afoul of the law, both written (in an encounter with a merchant, when he mistakes proferred goods as a gift) and unwritten (his amatory adventures with Violette). Arlequin's simple truthfulness eventually prevails over social considerations, and he wins Violette. This tale of the triumph of "le bon sauvage" reflects the later transmutation of the Wild

Man into a "paragon of virtue lost in unfolding civilization."[82] This purging of *l'homme sauvage* of his bestial and demonic aspects resulted in his idealization into "le bon sauvage," a fate which he shared with the Amerindians during the eighteenth century. This was the folkloric counterpart of the evangelization of the New World peoples, "auparavant sauvages & maintenant sacrez."[83]

The idea of "le bon sauvage" is, of course, as ancient as that of the Wild Man, as it is another aspect of the same general concept. According to Boas and Lovejoy, "from the 4th century BC, the Scythians were to the ancients what the American Indians were to the primitivists of the 16th to the 18th centuries in modern Europe."[84] While several different peoples were cast in this role at various times, the Scythians were the favorite. Christian Europe, remoulding the ideal of the Golden Age into the vision of the Garden of Eden, developed two traditions concerning the Scythians, one considering them admirable, the other as detestable.[85] But in either case they were regarded as savage. With the emergence of the Amerindian within the European range of vision, it was a comparatively simple matter to fit them into existing perspectives, particularly as there seemed to be resemblances between the two "savage" peoples, from the Old World and the New.

The inaccuracy of the view that Amerindians lived "comme bêtes irraisonables, ainsi que nature les a produits"[86] was soon recognized by those associated with them. As Father Claude d'Abbeville observed, he had gone to Brazil expecting to find fierce men, rude and savage, but instead he found a people who in the perfection of their senses in some ways excelled Europeans.[87] De Tertre agreed that Amerindians were savage only in name, and in the *Jesuit Relations* we find several assertions that the procedures of Amerindians were not those of brute beasts.[88] But instead of convincing Europeans that Amerindians were not savage, such statements were regarded as a defence of "le bon sauvage." The Jesuits, for instance, were accused of being more interested in finding civilization among the "savages" than they were in evangelizing them. Europeans, by transforming the Amerindians into an idealized and thus essentially unreal image, evaded accepting them as fellow human beings with a viable civilization of their own. At the same time, they quickly found a practical use for "le bon sauvage." He was moulded into an instrument for criticizing European society.[89]

As an aside to all this, it is interesting to note a seventeenth-century report of Amerindians taking exception to being called savages. They were said to have retorted that as far as they were concerned, it was the French who were the savages, "parce que nous [that is, the French] ne vivons pas à leur mode; qu'ils ont leur science & nous la nostre, comme si il y avoit deux façons de sçavoir les choses dans la vérité."[90] In Renaissance Europe, to admit that the

truth could be seen in more than one way was to risk the charge of heresy. As for Amerindian opinions, Montaigne reported the simple fact when he wrote that they would not be heard because these people were "sans culottes."

The irony of Europe's confusion of the Wild Man with the Amerindian was the latter's horror of hairiness. Both Columbus and Vespucci were struck by this, as was anyone who had anything to do with Amerindians during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[91] To cite Vespucci, "they do not allow any hair to grow on their eyebrows nor their eyelids nor anywhere on the body (with the exception of the head), for this reason—because they deem it coarse and animal-like."[92] Jesuits in the Canadian missions observed that their charges were repelled by the hairiness of Europeans, and sometimes openly mocked them on the subject. The crowning irony is that the Amerindians had a mythological hairy man of their own, who was also a forest figure. But this personage, who was sometimes female, preyed on young children rather than on women. Among the better-known manifestations of this figure is the Sasquatch of the Northwest Coast, who is as familiar to Canadians as Bigfoot is to Americans of the Pacific Coast.

The hairy man illustrates the tenacity of folklore in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary. It was easier to prove orthodoxy wrong about the habitability of the Antipodes than it was to dispel popular mythology. The first was a case of intellectual argument in which there was some glee in discomfiting authority; but in the second we are dealing with a type of belief that exists independently of scientific fact. As the Jesuits were to say of the Hurons, beliefs, no matter how apparently ridiculous, are hard to eradicate.[93]

More importantly, however, Europe's belief in the savagery of Amerindians was to have profound consequences in the realm of practical politics in the New World. For example, if Amerindians were savage, then they could not be counted as belonging to the family of nations; consequently, they were not sovereign and, by extension, did not possess proprietary rights. The French in New France sometimes negotiated alliances with Amerindians even as they claimed their territories, but this involved neither acknowledgement of aboriginal rights nor payment for lands. When an Amerindian converted to Christianity he was legally considered to be a French citizen, with full rights, including the privilege of living in France without any further declaration of naturalization. But whatever property he acquired was granted either by the French Crown or by arrangement with French individuals, and not by aboriginal right.[94] Total assimilation seemed only logical to the French, who during the days of New France never seriously doubted their *mission civilisatrice* any more than other European nations doubted theirs. Thus the way was paved for one of the great movements of Western civilization, the colonization of the New World.

Notes

1. This paper is largely derived from the third chapter of my Ph.D. dissertation, "The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas" (University of Ottawa, 1977).
2. Alexander actually issued four bulls in 1493 relating to the discovery of the New World, two of them called *Inter Caetera*. The texts and bibliographies of all four are reproduced by Francis Gardiner Davenport in *European Treaties bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies*, 4 vols. (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1917), I: 56–83. See also Robert Streit, *Bibliotheca Missionum*, 29 vols., (Rome: Herder, 1916–), II: 1–4; and II: 281 and XXIV: 3 for a bibliography of Paul's bull, which is usually referred to as *Sublimis Deus Sic Dilexit* but which is also known as *Excelsis Deus* and *Veritas Ipsa*.
3. The word "civilization" did not come into general use until toward the end of the seventeenth century.
4. Pierre Larousse (1817–1875), *Grand Dictionnaire Universel*, 17 vols. (Pâris, 1905).
5. Giovanni Pietro Maffei (Jean-Pierre Maffé) (1533–1603), *Histoire des Indes* (Lyon: Jean Pillehotte, 1603), 98.
6. Sebastian Münster (1489–1552), *La Cosmographie universelle* (Bâle, 1556).
7. Jean-Baptiste de La Curne de Sainte-Palaye (1697–1781), *Dictionnaire historique de l'ancien langage françois; ou Glossaire de la langue françoise depuis son origine jusqu'au siècle de Louis XIV*. 10 vols. (Niort: Le Favre, 1875–1882).
8. Pierre Richelet (1631–1698), *Dictionnaire Françoise . . .* (Génève: Jean Herman Widerhold, 1680).
9. Abbé Antoine Furetière (1619–1688), *Dictionnaire universel . . .*, 2 vols. (La Haye & Rotterdam: Arnout et Renier Leers, 1691).
10. Christopher Columbus (c. 1451–1506) *Oeuvres*, translated and annotated by Alexandre Cioranescu (Paris: Gallimard, 1973).
11. *The First Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci*, (1451–1512), (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1893). See also, Martin Waldseemüller, (1470–1521?) *Cosmographiae Introductio*, trans. Joseph Fischer and Franz von Wieser (Ann Arbor University Microfilms, March of America Facsimile Series no. 2, 1966).
12. Henry Percival Biggar, *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier* (Ottawa: Acland, 1924), p. 60.
13. Pietro Martire d'Anghiera (Pierre Martyr) (1455–1526), *De Orbe Novo*, Traduit avec notes et commentaires par Paul Gaffarel (Paris: E. Leroux, 1907), p. 55.
14. Sir Clements Robert Markham, ed., *The Letters of Amerigo Vespucci and other documents illustrative of his career* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1894), p. 9.
15. Le Père Pierre Le Moyne (1602–1671), *Les Peintures Morales . . .* 2 vols. (Paris: S. Cramoisy, 1640–43), II: 620–29.
16. Ibid.
17. Pierre d'Avity, Seigneur de Montmartin (1573–1635), *Les Estats, Empires et principautez du monde* (Paris: P. Chevalier, 1619), p. 315.
18. Public Archives of Canada, Archives des Colonies, C11A I:10–11.
19. Emeric de Crucé (c.1590–1648), *Le Nouveau Cynée* (Paris, 1623), 26.
20. d'Avity, *Les Estats*, p. 315.
21. Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (1559–1625), *The General history of the vast continent and islands of America, commonly called the West Indies . . . .* Translated into English by Capt. John Stevens, 6 vols. (London: J. Batley, 1725–26), I:58.
22. d'Avity, *Les Estats*, 316.
23. Ibid.
24. Le Père Louis Hennepin (1626–c.1705), *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America*, 2 vols. (London, 1698), II:84.

25. Markham, *Letters of Amerigo Vespucci,* p. 7.
26. Ibid.
27. Le Père Louis Hennepin, *Description de la Louisiane,* (Paris: Sebastian Hure, 1683), p. 55.
28. d'Avity, *Les Estats,* pp. 316–317.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., pp. 317–18.
31. José de Acosta (c.1539–1600), *Histoire naturelle et moralle des Indes* (Paris, 1600), pp. 287v–288.
32. R.G. Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents,* 73 vols., (Cleveland; Burrows Bros., 1896), I:11, 13; III: 193–97; XX:71. For a Spanish view on this subject, see the letter of Friar Domingo de Betanzos, written in 1534, which argued that the limitations of Indian languages could easily lead to gross errors in explaining Christian doctrine. It is reproduced by Lewis Hanke in "Pope Paul III and the American Indians", *The Harvard Theological Review* 30 no. 2 (April 1937): 102. Two centuries later the same point was being argued. See H.G. Loskiel, *History of the Missions of the United Brethren Among the Indians in North America* (London, 1794), pp. 20–21.
33. Jean-Pierre Maffée, in Claude Duret, *Thresor de l'histoire des langues de cest univers* (Cologne: Matth. Berjon, 1613), p. 945. Cited by Stephen J. Greenblatt in his paper "Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century" presented at the conference "The First Image of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old," at the University of California, 6–9 February 1975. Canadian Indians also had difficulties with the letters f, l, r. See Public Archives of Canada, AC C11D 10, Mémoire de Lamothe Cadillac, 1693. Also, Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, *Old John Neptune and other Maine Indian Shamans* (Portland: Anthoensen Press, 1946).
34. For instance, Frobisher's sailors, acting on the assumption that New World natives mated indiscriminately at first encounter, brought together an Inuit man and woman who had been captured separately. The sailors were disappointed. Richard Hakluyt (1552?–1616), *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation,* 12 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1903–1905), VII: 306–307.
35. Henry Hawks, in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* IX:397. Later, Thomas Jefferys made a similar observation about Canadian Indians during summer in *The natural and civil history of the French dominions in North and South America* (London, 1761), p. 93.
36. Jean de Léry (1534–1611), *Histoire d'un Voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* (Lausanne: Bibliothèque Romande, 1972) [based on Geneva edition of 1580], p. 118.
37. Gilbert Chinard, *L'Exotisme américain dans la litterature française au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1911), p. 135.
38. Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science,* 8 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964–1966), V:577, citing Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576), *De Rerum Varietate,* Lib. VIII: Chap. 40.
39. *Pausanias' Description of Greece,* trans. Arthur Richard Shilleto (London: George Bell, 1886), I:XXIII:13.
40. Flavius Philostratus, *The Life of Appollonius of Tyana,* trans. F.C. Conybeare, 2 vols. (London: Heineman, 1948–50), VI:XXVII.
41. H.W. Janson, "A 'Memento Mori' Among Early Italian Prints", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 3 (1939–41): 248.
42. See Jean Chevalier, *Dictionnaire des Symboles* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1969). Also, Pierre Grimal, ed., *Larousse World Mythology* (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965).
43. Silenus began as a woodland deity who presided over springs and running streams. According to *Pausanias,* I:XXIII, the name Silenus at one point was applied to all satyrs. In any event, he was shaggy and full-bearded, had horse's ears, and was extraordinarily wise. In the sixth century he became associated with Dionysus. Socrates was compared to Silenus in wisdom, irony, and appearance.
44. Hayden White, "The Forms of Wildness" in Edward Dudley and Maximillian Novak, *The Wild Man Within* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1942), pp. 3–38.

45. Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment and Demonology* (Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 1–33.
46. However, an extremely ancient version of the Wild Man, Enkidu, was the embodiment of natural innocence. Seduced by a harlot, and consequently rejected by his former companions the wild animals, he had no recourse except to go to the the city and become civilized. See N.K. Sandars, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp. 60–67.
47. Merlin, the master of nature, was descended from an incubus in the guise of a Wild Man. See Russell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown, 1966), p. 462.
48. Edmund Spenser (1552?–1599), *The Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Limited Editions Club, 1953), IV:VII.
49. Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, p. 51.
50. Ibid., p. 58.
51. Ibid. Also, Richard Barber and Anne Riches, *A Dictionary of Fabulous Beasts* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 154.
52. A. Van Gennep, *Manuel de folklore francais contemporain* (Paris: A. Picard, 1937–), I:924.
53. *Le Dix-huictième tome du Mercure Francais* (Paris: Estienne Richer, 1633), p. 59.
54. Public Archives of Canada, AC CIIA 7:45–47. Denonville to the minister, 13 November 1685.
55. Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, p. 43
56. Henry Percival Biggar, *The Precursors of Jacques Cartier 1497–1534* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1911), p. 66, Letter of Pietro Pasqualigo, 19 October 1501.
57. Prosper and Mathieu Paulmier, *Eusebii Caesariensis Episcopi Chronicon* (Paris: Henri Estienne, 1512). Entry for 1509.
58. Caius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (AD 23/24–79), *Historia Naturalis*, VII:II:24.
59. Nordenskiöld, Adolf Erik, (1832–1901), *Periplus, An Essay on the Early History of Charts & Sailing Directions* (Stockholm, 1897), plate 39.
60. Antonio Pigafetta (c. 1480/91–c. 1534), *Le Voyage et navigation faict par les Espaignolz es Isles de Mollucques* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1522). Section II: 54. Another contemporary reference is found in J-A-C Buchon, *Faictz et dictz de bonne mémoire maistre Jehan Molinet* (Paris, 1531), cvii.
61. *Le Mercure Galant*, April 1681, p. 143.
62. The confusion exists even today. When I first encountered the hairy man while researching in Paris, my first reaction was to regard this figure as being somehow derived from early reports of Amerindians. A recent edition of the *Mémoire* of Nicolas Perrot, that of Editions Elysée (Montreal, 1973), has figures of the Wild Man and Wild Woman on its endpapers; obviously the editors were under the same impression.
63. André Thevet (1502–1590), *Les Singularitez de la France Antarctique*. Notes et commentaires par Paul Gaffarel (Paris: Maisonneuve & Cie, 1878). Chapter XXXI.
64. Ibid., 413.
65. Léry, *Histoire d'un Voyage*, pp. 60, 97.
66. Marc Lescarbot (c.1570–1642), *Nova Francia: or the Description of that part of New France, which is one continent with Virginia*, trans. "P.E." (London, George Bishop, 1609), p. 200.
67. George Wrong, ed., *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons by Father Gabriel Sagard* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1939), p. 138; Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce de Lahontan, *Mémoires de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: François l'Honore, 1705), II:95; Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, XXXVIII: 257; William F. Ganong, ed., *New Relation of Gaspesia by Father Chrestien LeClercq* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1910), p. 92; Père Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre (1610–1687), *Histoire générale des Isles des Christophe . . . et autres dans l'Amérique* (Paris: Jacques Langlois, 1654), pp. 296, 398.
68. Charles Coste, ed., *Avantures militaires au XVIIIe siècle d'après les mémoires de Jean-*

Baptiste d'Aleyrac (1737–1796) (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1925), p. 36. Another aspect of the European iconography of Amerindians drew much less attention but indicated even more surely the identification of New World man with the Wild Man. This was the depiction of Amerindian women with sagging breasts, a characteristic of the Wild Woman. See Bernadette Boucher, *La sauvage aux seins pendants* (Paris: Hermann, 1977).

69. *The historie of the world. Commonly called The Natural historie of C. Plinius Secundus*, trans. Philomen Holland (London: A. Islip, 1601), p. 156.
70. Horst Waldemar Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, 1952), p. 337.
71. Robert M. and Ada W. Yertes, *The Great Apes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 12; Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, p. 351 n47.
72. Ibid., p. 83, citing Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus.*
73. Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, p. 92.
74. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, p. 207, citing Cardano, *De subtilitate* (Basel, 1547), Lib. X.
75. Yerkes, *Great Apes*, p. 18, citing George Edwards, *Gleanings of natural history . . .*, 3 vols. (London, 1758–64).
76. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore*, p. 86.
77. Ibid., p. 80, citing Thomas Cantimprensis, *Liber de natura rerum* (1240).
78. William Frederic Creeney (1825–1897), *A Book of Fac-similes of Monumental Brasses of the Continent of Europe, with brief descriptive notes* (Norwich, 1884), p. 21.
79. Such a figure, cast in iron, is to be seen in the Musée Le Secq de Tournelles in Rouen.
80. Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, p. 65.
81. Ibid., p. 84. For an illustration indicating how this came about, see the Breughel painting reproduced in Bernheimer, fig. 16. According to Chevalier, Arlequin (Harlequin) symbolized a malicious buffoon of unstable personality, a being who was not yet individualized. He was a stock character of *la commedia dell'arte.*
82. Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, p. 102. Bernheimer theorizes that this development indicated the uneasiness of Europeans with their own civilization, particularly its organized violence.
83. Charles Chaulmer (d. 1680), *Le Nouveau Monde ou l'Amérique Chrétienne* (Paris: S. Piget, 1659), p. 8.
84. George Boas and Arthur O. Lovejoy, eds., *Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 289.
85. George Boas, *Essays on Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1948), p. 137.
86. Thevet, *Singularitez de la France Antarctique*, p. 135.
87. Père Claude, d'Abbeville, (d. 1632), *Histoire de la Mission des Pères Capucins en l'Isle de Maragnan et terres circonvoisins* (Paris: François Huby, 1614; facsimile edition by Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Granz, Austria, 1963), pp. 311–311b.
88. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Isles des Christophe*, p. 396; Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, XXI:55; L: 171, among others.
89. For one of the earliest examples of this usage of the Amerindian "bon sauvage", see Pierre Martyr, *Extrait ou recueil des Illes nouvellement trouvées en la grand mer Oceane . . .* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1532), pp. 68v–69.
90. Sieur de La Borde, "Relation de l'origine, moeurs, coustumes, religion, guerres et voyages des Caraibes, sauvages des isles Antilles de l'Amerique," p. 15, in Henri Justel, *Recueil de Diverses Voyages Faits En Afrique et en l'Amerique . . .* (Paris: Louis Billaine, 1674).
91. See Thevet's comment, *Singularitez de la France Antarctique*, pp. 13–14.
92. Waldseemüller, *Cosmographiae Introductio*, pp. 92–97.
93. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, XII:181.
94. George F.G. Stanley, "The First Indian 'Reserves' in Canada," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 4 (1950): 209–10.

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Plate 12. A large and a small hairy wild man confront a disconcerted nobleman. From a sixteenth-century book on curiosities of nature, which was published in both England and France. Contemporary accounts reported the capture of manlike monsters in Northern Europe.